

REMARKS

Applicant, by the amendments presented above, has made a concerted effort to present claims which clearly define over the prior art of record, and thus to place this case in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected the pending claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 7,237,154 (Zorian).

In making the rejection, the Examiner asserts that Zorain discloses loading a value into an on-chip counter through a test pattern during production testing, where the value represents an amount of redundant elements which are allowed for a repair, and pointed to Zorian's status bit registers 810 and 812 as satisfying this limitation. However, the status bit registers 810 and 812 of Zorain merely keep track of the status of whether a redundant row is available as a substitute. Applicant respectfully submits that the status bit registers 810 and 812 of Zorian do not satisfy this limitation. A value is not loaded into either one of these registers 810 or 812 via a test pattern during production testing, where the value which is loaded represents an amount of redundant elements which are allowed for a repair.

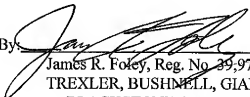
Nevertheless, to further distinguish the claimed invention from that which is disclosed in Zorain, claim 1 has been amended to specifically claim the step of identifying memories which require a number of redundant elements for repair which exceeds the value that has been loaded into the on-chip counter (claim 12 is similar, but is directed to an apparatus). Also claimed is the step of using a repair solution to repair a first set of damaged memories while not repairing and instead flagging a second set of damaged memories, wherein each of the memories in the second set have been identified as requiring a number of redundant elements to be used for the repair.

where the number exceeds the value which has been loaded into the on-chip counter and then, later, using the repair solution to repair damaged memories which were not previously flagged. Applicant respectfully submits that this is neither disclosed nor suggested by Zorian.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims of the application are allowable over the rejections of the Examiner. Should the present claims not be deemed adequate to effectively define the patentable subject matter, the Examiner is respectfully urged to call the undersigned attorney of record to discuss the claims in an effort to reach an agreement toward allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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